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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 002379

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA SEEKS ASSISTANCE IN WITHDRAWAL FROM  
SOMALIA

REF: ADDIS 2322

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Tekeda Alemu called in the Ambassador of the U.S. and Charges d'Affaires of the UK and Germany September 2 to discuss ideas to avoid a power vacuum, violence, and possible revival of extremist elements as Ethiopian forces begin phased redeployments from Mogadishu back to Ethiopia. Tekeda said Ethiopia's departure from Somalia should be viewed as a phased operation to be conducted in the coming weeks, not months. (In private talks with the Prime Minister, Meles noted that withdrawals would be in phases from Mogadishu to Baidoa and then to Ethiopia.) Ethiopia finds its Somalia operations a huge financial drain and, while they will try to avoid a "hasty" redeployment, Ethiopia may redeploy troops quickly, creating a potential power vacuum. Tekeda tried to portray the extremists and al-Shabaab as disorganized and bickering among themselves, but the extremists could expand their influence as Ethiopian forces leave Somalia. Tekeda noted challenges which must be faced. Not only strengthening the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and establishing security and governance structures in Somalia, but also dealing with clan dynamics, particularly with the Hawiye clan, could undermine the TFG. The problem of Kismayo, now under extremist influence, must be addressed. The precise redeployment plan will be discussed at the upcoming September 15-19 meeting of the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) party.

¶2. (C) The senior foreign diplomats raised ideas including building on the potential benefits of the recently signed Djibouti peace accord and Roadmap for the implementation of understanding among the TFG leadership signed in Addis Ababa last week, which could strengthen the TFG government. The diplomats expressed concern over the TFG's ability to cope with extremists after the pull-out of Ethiopian forces. Tekeda and the diplomats also expressed concern on whether there could be a trust fund established and a stabilization force secured to allow Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia. Tekeda noted that Saudi Arabia had been viewed as the main important source of funds to pay for the foreign troops to stabilize Mogadishu. But this no longer appears possible. Tekeda looked to the diplomats to work with their respective capitals on such a fund and efforts to work with the UN and to realize a stabilization force.

COMMENT

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¶3. (C) Tekeda told the Ambassador in private that Foreign

Minister Seyoum and Prime Minister Meles had discussed redeployment of Ethiopian forces be raised with those countries which could help Ethiopia leave Somalia. The UK, Germany, and U.S. will meet with Tekeda again, and other countries may be included. As was noted in reftel, it was clear that Tekeda was looking to the U.S. and the other countries for ideas on minimizing the problems in Somalia with an Ethiopian pullout. The Ambassador underscored, and Tekeda agreed, that even with the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces, the insecurity from extremist groups could expand with continued infiltrations into Ethiopia, as well as increased efforts by extremists to expand into Puntland, Somaliland, and neighboring states such as Djibouti and Kenya, all considered by extremists as part of greater Somalia. The Ambassador plans to meet with the Prime Minister soon and will raise this issue. End Comment.  
YAMAMOTO